

Message Text

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12

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3586

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

USLO PEKING

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

USCINCEUR VAINHINGEN GER

CONFIDENTIAL LUANDA 0622

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI AO

SUBJECT: FNLA ESTABLISHES A MAJOR MILITARY BASE IN NORTHERN ANGOLA

CINCLANT AND CINCEUR FOR POLAD

1. WHILE ON A VISIT TO ZAIRE DISTRICT IN THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF ANGOLA, A CONGEN OFFICER WAS TOLD BY THE ACTING DISTRICT GOVERNOR, A PORTUGUESE, THAT FNLA HAS ESTABLISHED AND IS RAPIDLY BUILDING UP A LARGE MILITARY BASE AT QUIENDE (14 DEGREES 04'E - 6 DEGREES 29' S), 20 MILES SOUTHWEST OF SAO SALVADOR. FNLA HAS UPWARDS OF 2,000 TROOPS IN THE BASE AND THE ACTING GOVERNOR SAID HE WAS TOLD BY FNLA THAT THIS IS SOON TO BECOME THE MAJOR FNLA MILITARY TRAINING AND SUPPORT BASE, TO REPLACE KINKUZU IN THE REP OF ZAIRE. HE DID NOT KNOW IF THIS MEANT THE CHINESE ADVISORS WOULD MOVE INTO ANGOLA. HE SAID FNLA WAS UNUSUALLY SENSITIVE ABOUT THIS BASE AND HAVE TOLD PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE PILOTS THAT THE NEXT TIME THEY OVERFLY IT THEY WILL BE SHOT AT.

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2. COMMENT: THE TRANSFER OF FNLA'S MAJOR BASE TO ANGOLA WOULD

MAKE POLITICAL AND MILITARY SENSE FOR ROBERTO AT THIS JUNCTURE. NEARBY SAO SALVADOR IS THE HISTORIC CAPITAL OF THE KINGDOM OF THE BALONGOS AND IS THE HEARTLAND OF FNLA'S ETHNIC SUPPORT. MOVING INTO ANGOLA WOULD FREE ROBERTO FROM MOBUTU'S DOMINANCE AND ALLOW HIM TO ACT INDEPENDENTLY ON THE ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT MATTER OF CABINDA. THE BASE IS ONLY 300 MILES FROM LUANDA, MOST OF WHICH IS HARD SURFACE ROAD, THUS IMPROVING THE REACTION TIME OF FNLA'S FORCES. FNLA HAS SECURED THE PORT AT AMBRIZETE AND HAS REMOVED ALL MPLA FORCES FROM THAT CITY AS WELL AS TOMBOCO, INSURING AN UNMOLESTED SUPPLY ROUTE FROM AMBRIZETE TO QUIENDE. PORTER

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